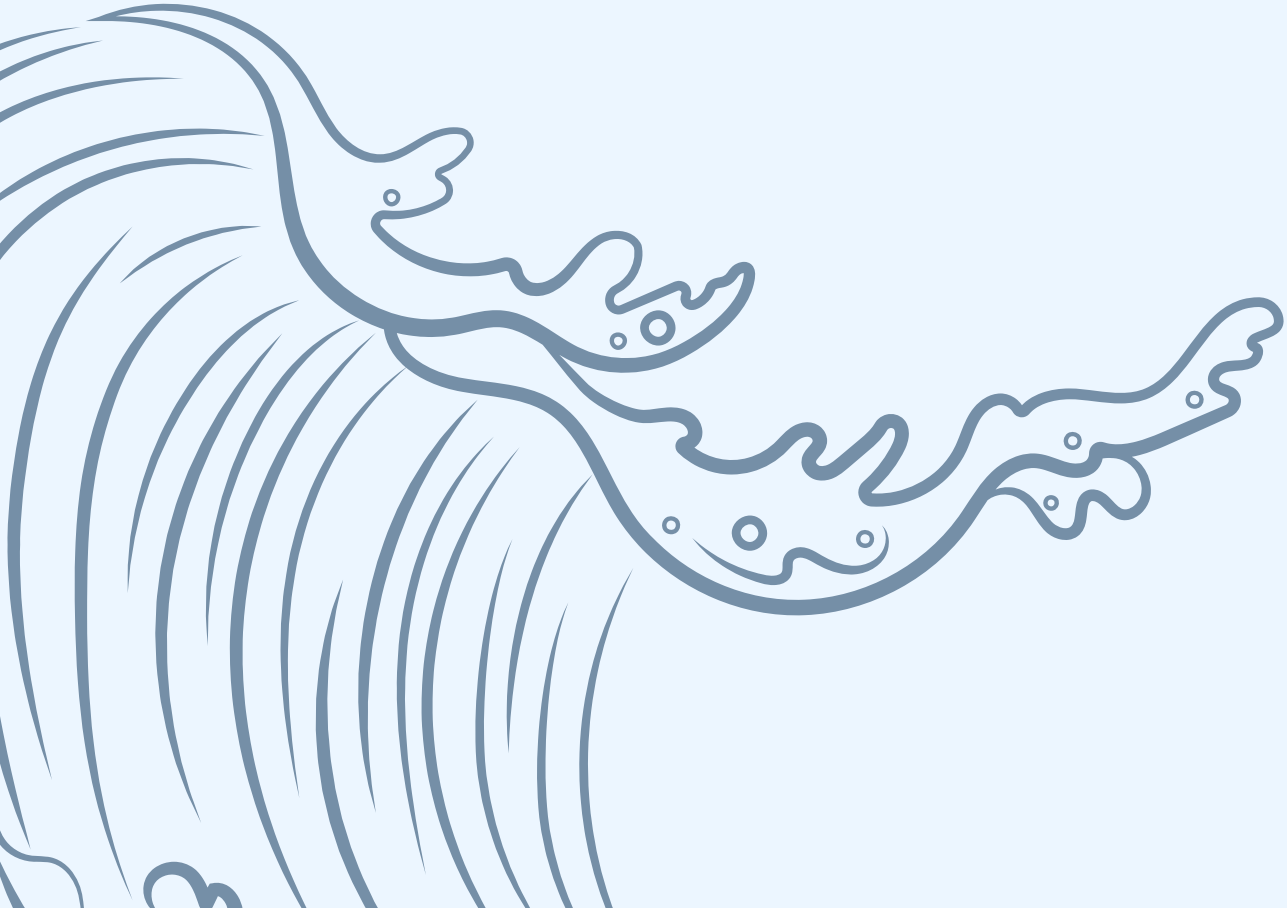
SEA OF FAITH: PRAYERS FOR MARINERS

Compiled by Barista Uno
Marine Café Blog

“Young man, be not forgetful of prayer. Every time you pray, if your prayer is sincere, there will be new feeling and new meaning in it, which will give you fresh courage, and you will understand that prayer is an education.”

Fyodor Dostoevsky

The Brothers Karamazov

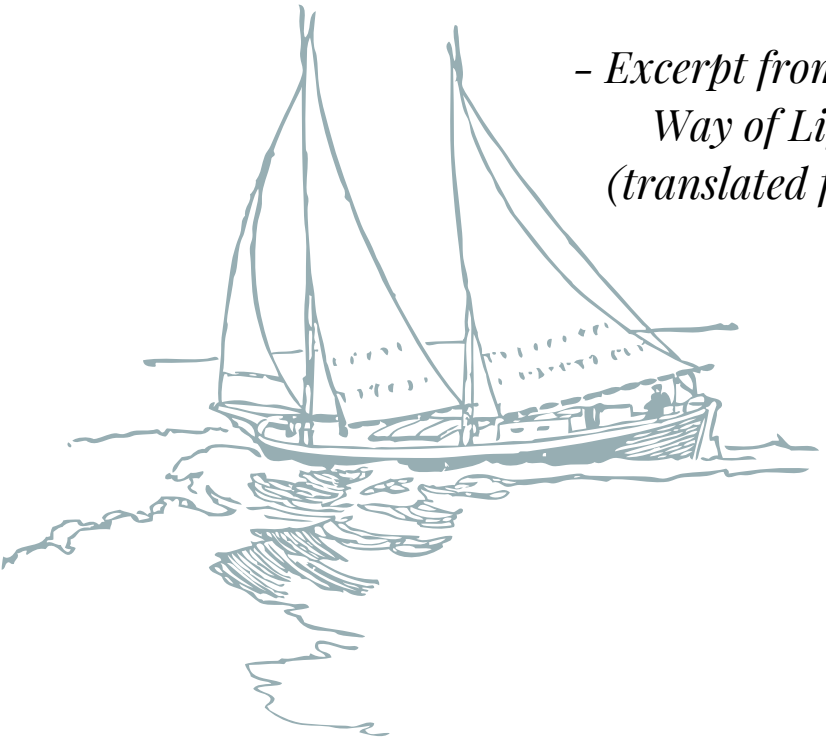


May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their illness,
And may every disease in the world
Never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be freed;
May the powerless find power,
And may people think of benefiting one another.

May all travelers find happiness
Everywhere they go,
And without any effort may they accomplish
Whatever they set out to do.

May those who sail in ships and boats
Obtain whatever they wish for,
And having safely returned to the shore
May they joyfully reunite with their relatives.



- Excerpt from 'A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life' by Acharya Shantideva (translated from the Sanskrit by Stephen Batchelor)

O Allah, I seek Your forgiveness and Your protection in this world and the next.
O Allah, I seek Your forgiveness and Your protection in my religion, in my worldly affairs, in my family and in my wealth.
O Allah, conceal my secrets and preserve me from anguish.
O Allah, guard me from what is in front of me and behind me, from my left, and from my right, and from above me. I seek refuge in Your Greatness from being struck down from beneath me.

— Ibn Majah: 3871, Abu Dawud: 5074; courtesy of Islamicfinder.org

May our prayer be acceptable in Thy presence, Lord, our God and God of our forefathers! and for the sake of Thine attribute of mercy, cause the waters to cease from their raging, and still the waves of Thy great deep. Conduct us speedily to our destined port, for the issues of life and death are in Thy hands. Hearken unto our supplication, even at this present hour when we are praying unto Thee. Calm the storm, and conduct us with kind and gentle breezes. Guard us from the tumultuous billows, and from all the perils of the sea ; guard us from the lightning and the tempest, and the confusion of darkness; guard us from dangers by water and fire, and from every obstruction, injury or fear.

From the treasury of the elements, O God, send forth a favorable wind. May all who have charge of the vessel be faithful and vigilant, active and skillful in directing or obeying, that so we may speedily and safely be brought to our destined port. Thou who madest the sea canst still the waves thereof; Thou who didst create the winds, canst allay their rage. O Lord! guard our souls which depend upon Thee, and deliver us from evil. As we put our trust in Thee, let us never be confounded. And as for us all, we will bless Thy name, God ! from henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

— Jewish prayer during a storm at sea, from Hours of Devotion (1889), translated from the German 'Studen der Andacht' by M. Mayer

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the
paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou
art with me; thy rod and thy staff they
comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the
presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my
head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all
the days of my life: and I will dwell in the
house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 23

Holy Bible (King James Version)

A Prayer Under the Pressure of Violent Anguish

by Robert Burns (Scottish poet, 1759–1796)

O THOU Great Being! what Thou art,
Surpasses me to know;
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Are all Thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey Thy high behest.

Sure, Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But, if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design,
Then man my soul with firm resolves,
To bear and not repine!

The following prayer is often attributed to Sir Francis Drake (c.1540 –1596), the famous English sea captain, privateer, and explorer who circumnavigated the world in a single expedition (1577–80). However, its authorship has never been verified. The words of the prayer seem too modern, not the way English was used during the Elizabethan Age. This bolsters the view that Drake did not actually compose them. In any case, this is a beautiful prayer for modern-day seafarers, whatever their faith.

Disturb us, Lord

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.

We ask You to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love.

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